

THE CRITICS' CORNER.

WEEKLY CHAT REGARDING WRITERS AND BOOKS.

Josiah Gilbert Holland.—A Biographical Sketch.—Literary Braveries.

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND: By Mrs. H. M. Plunkett. With portraits and illustrations. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. \$1.50. For sale by West, Johnston & Co.

The lives of such men as J. G. Holland, the apostle to the plain people, have a moral force which is incalculable. His personality possessed a magnetism which no merely intellectual excellence or strength could have imparted, and which was the outgrowth of his great heart and mighty human sympathy. The purity and strength which he possessed on the moral side, his utter freedom from the self-consciousness which is so apt to accompany great gifts and eminent success, his symmetrical individuality—these make his biography not merely a fascinating, but a helpful, study.

Born of typical New England parents, the mother abounding in all womanly and housewifely virtues, gentle, practical, serene—the father somewhat of a dreamer, but of sterling qualities of mind and heart—both of deeply religious character, he belonged, says his biographer, to those "whose souls by nature sit on thrones." "John and Judith Holland," she tells us, "were members of the church that was formed in Plymouth, England, and emigrated with their pastor to Dorchester, Mass.; and whatever thread of Dr. Holland's ancestry we trace to its beginning, brings us to one of those God-fearing Puritans, who settled about the 'Bay.' His mother was born in Hebron, Conn., but grew up to womanhood in the Gilbert homestead in Belchertown, Mass., and in that town his father came to man's estate, and the twain were married November 5, 1810." Here was born the child who was destined to become so famous a man, and whose career illustrates so finely the possibilities of talent united to indomitable energy, even if unaccompanied by any other advantages. "Poverty," says Mrs. Plunkett, "had indeed knotted a whip of scorpions to scourge him to the utmost use of his faculties that he might escape from an utterly distasteful life—the life, at the time of which she writes, being that of an employee in a factory at South Hadley. The overseer of the room in which he was employed, having, in an offensive and rude manner, declared him to be 'dreamy,' and found fault with him for letting his threads break or not being sufficiently quick at mending them—our future poet and editor with defiance in eyes and manner said: 'I'll give you to understand, if I live many years, I was born for something other than to tend a spinning jenny,' as he did, to the satisfaction of a continent.

The history of his early struggles to gain an education, of the way in which nascent ambition thrust aside all obstacles, including those of delicate health and poverty, is extremely interesting and illustrates the truth of that saying of the famous Corsican—a truth which has, in our comparatively brief American history been so often illustrated—that "moral power is to physical, as three parts in four." First a writing master, then a medical doctor, he finally, following his irrepressible bent, entered the field of journalism, and may be said to have formally entered upon his life work, in the publication of *The Bay State Weekly Courier*. The following is Dr. Holland's own account of his initial step in this direction:

"On the first of January, 1847, a literary newspaper was commenced by J. G. Holland, a physician, as a refuge from uncongenial pills, and a still more uncongenial lack of dispensing them. At the end of about three months, he relinquished the proprietorship of the paper to Horace S. Taylor, its printer, he still remaining its editor. At the end of about six months the paper was discontinued for lack of support. The publication was nominally simultaneous in Springfield and Cabotville. The list was sold to the 'Republican.'"

In 1845, Dr. Holland married Miss Elizabeth Chapin, of Springfield, Mass., who exercised a most beneficial influence upon his future life. "Her strong practical judgment was an offset to his more imaginative temperament, and, though making no literary pretensions herself, she was a remarkably sympathetic and correct judge of what it is that appeals to, and influences, and is valued by that great company of the plain people whom eventually her husband was to address to such purpose."

From this date until that of his sudden death, October 12, 1881, the story of his life is the record of the successes which give him a place among our foremost men of letters.

"Scribner's Monthly" was founded in the summer of 1870, the first number appearing in November, and after eleven years of phenomenal success, exchanged the name "Scribner's" for that of "The Century," and it is pathetic to note that, as his biographer states, the second number of the newly-christened "Century" was the one that announced that "Elinor" had been written at the end of Dr. Holland's career, and contained in lieu of the familiar "Topics of the Time," his obituary notice. The portion of the first edition that goes to foreign lands was already printed and on its way when he died."

Dr. Holland was accustomed to say of his life, and the different positions he had filled, that he had never fitted himself beforehand for them; that he stepped in, and then worked with all his power to adapt himself to the place in which he found himself, and stepped from a country newspaper to a position at Scribner's—the editorial chair of a magazine which was to achieve an international reputation was no exception."

With regard to the marvellous evolution of this magazine, he says: "Of the editorial management of 'Scribner's' I have nothing to say, except that it has been conscientiously and industriously performed, and that I have had a corps of able and enthusiastic assistants, who have given themselves to the work, as if the magazine indeed, were all their own." "He did not," says Mrs. Plunkett, "claim the highest place for its literary contents, but said the success was owing to the superb engravings, and the era it had introduced of improved illustrated art." Everybody does not know how the pace set by the 'Scribner' spurred other magazines to new endeavors, and led the way to rich monthly feasts set before the public in pictures of all imaginable things in the skies and the air, in the earth, and in the waters under the earth. Dr. Holland bestowed the praise where it was deserved: 'This feature of our work is attributable to Mr. R. W. Glider and Mr. A. W. Drake, the former, the office editor, and the latter, the superintendent of the illustrative department. Mr. Smith and I, any further than we have stood beside these men with encouragement and money, deserve no credit for the marvellous development that has been made in illustration. Perhaps this is not quite true, for Mr. Smith was the first to insist on the experiment of printing the illustrated forms on dry paper. This had much to do with the success of our cuts, and Scribner's Monthly enjoyed a practical monopoly of this mode of cutting for years. The effects achieved in this way excited great curiosity, both in this country, and in England. Mr. Smith may, therefore, legitimately claim to have revolutionized the cutting of the world; and it is another illustration of the fact that reforms are rarely made in their own art, by routine men. It takes a mechanic to invent an agricultural machine; and a lawyer, turned man of business, to discover that damp paper is not the best for printing cuts on.'"

Truly that degree of modesty which places honor where honor is due in every case except its own is not proverbially an editorial virtue!

Prominent among Dr. Holland's "finds" as editor of Scribner's were Frances Hodgson Burnett, and George W. Cable. Mrs. Plunkett's admirably written book is also prettily and well illustrated.

A portrait of Dr. Holland on the fly leaf shows a face wherein is an unusual blending of strength and gentleness. The eyes are at once keen and full of feeling, the nose straight and prominent, the jaw powerful, the brow fine. Quite a considerable portion of Mrs. Plunkett's book is devoted to comment upon the life and character of Dr. Holland made after his death by the various newspapers and magazines of the country. An illustration on the last page represents the grave of the famous writer, at Springfield, Mass. The marble monument is chaste and simple, bearing the following upon its whiteness:

"JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND.
Born July 24, 1812. Died October 12, 1881.
"For the great hereafter I trust in the Infinite Love as it is expressed to me in the life and death of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Great, owing to superbly persistent courage and effort, the brilliance of his success converging from the editorial chair of a great magazine to the poverty, care, and obscurity of the little farm-house at Belchertown, Mass., the pure, strong nature remained unspotted by success, and in death as in life, delighted to avow its utter reliance upon God, retaining always its utter simplicity. We are indebted to Mrs. Plunkett for her charming book, which is destined to find many readers among those to whom biography of genius and character combined is a fascinating study.

BRIEF LITERARY NOTES.

Regarding People Whose Names Are Well Known.

Mr. Bok, editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, gives this list of literary men and women in America whose earnings, purely from a literary career, give them "what may be called a comfortable living—a living such as comes to men as foremost in other professions as are those in literature." Men—Low Wallace, Marion Crawford, William Dean Howells, Frank R. Stockton, Will Carleton, Mark Twain, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Rudyard Kipling, Hamlin Garland. Women—Frances Hodgson Burnett, Amelia E. Barr, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps-Ward, Mary E. Wilkins, and Sarah Orne Jewett.

The title of the novel which Mr. Chas. Dudley Warner has written for publication in Harper's Magazine later in the year is "The Golden Mouse." It is a story of a New York society, a sequel to the same author's "A Little Journey in the World," and will be illustrated with characteristic pictures by W. T. Smedley.

Mark Twain has rejoined his family on the Continent. He said to a London interviewer while passing through that city that he has three unnamed books ready for publication. His story of "Tom Sawyer Abroad," which has been running in *St. Nicholas*, will appear in book form both here and in England.

"Dodo" has reached its thirteenth edition in England, but has now been supplanted in fashionable favor by "A Yellow Aster," which turns out to be the work of a Mrs. Manningham Caffyn. Like "Dodo," "A Yellow Aster" is the first novel of an amateur dabbler in literature.

The manuscript of an unpublished story by Tennyson, called "Mungo, the American," was sold not long ago in England. It was written in 1823. The story shows how Mungo found a sword and how the weapon finally came into the possession of its real owner.

Ibsen dines every day at the Grand Hotel, Christiania. He sits in solitary grandeur at a little table, seldom speaking to anyone except the waiter, but very often taking notes of those around him. Ibsen's wife is alive, but they are never seen together.

FOOD FOR REFLECTION.

GATHERED FROM THE RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL PRESS.

Words of Wisdom on Religious and Moral Subjects Which are Worthy of Attention from the Thoughtful.

The Soul's Shepherd.

Thou, whom my soul admires above
All earthly joy and earthly love,
Tell me, dear Shepherd, let me know,
Where do thy sweetest pastures grow?

Where is the shadow of that Rock
That from the sun defends thy flock?
Fain would I feed among thy sheep—
Among them rest—Among them sleep.

Why should thy birds appear like one
That turns aside to paths unknown?
My constant feet would never rove,
Would never seek another love.

THE DIVINE LOVE AND OURS.

The Truest Love Means Power to Him Who Exercises It.

In making us after his own image, God gave our nature the law of love to guide and govern it. Mr. Hudson says, "But our greatest difficulty and our consequent failure lies in the fact that we try to love in an impossible way. No one can love people simply because it is his duty to do so, or because he wills it. Love is not a product of the will, nor is it a pleasant grace of manner. It is neither a gush of feeling, a shake of the hand, a smooth modulation of the voice, a smile nor any social sweetness. Human nature can be very genial. It is often most charming, not only in its manners but in itself. It does love many things and many people; but it is always because they are lovable, and not because there is a fountain of goodness and love that overflows and loves of itself. God, however, is such a fountain. He loves people not because they are always lovable but because He Himself is love. No ugliness of others makes him ugly. No anger makes him angry. He is 'never overcome of evil,' but is constantly 'overcoming it with good,' with love. That is the strong, wise, happy way in which God wants all the children of His Kingdom to bear themselves. He wants them always to preserve the good mood and then live it—to consider that anger, hatred, envy, malice, and weakness, and that love is power. Love is for our general life what the trained condition is for the athlete. It is the condition in which we can do most, and do it best. Love is not created in us by unlovable persons. It never begins with an enemy. That would be an attempt to reverse the natural order of growth. As well try to get fruit by planting blossoms, which would soon wither and die. There is some similarity in all kinds of growth, whether in the natural world or the spiritual world. The order of soil, seed, roots, trunk, bloom, and fruit cannot be inverted. Loving an enemy is ripe fruit, and possibly the most difficult to mature of any fruit that grows in human nature. When there is great sincerity the conditions are very favorable, and love may grow very rapidly. But it is a 'fruit of the spirit,' of the human spirit when the Holy Spirit abides within." It is possible for even a naturally envious, covetous nature to become generous and noble. John, the beloved disciple, the one who rested upon the Master's bosom, and could hear the beatings of that heart of Divine love, was once so narrow-minded and bigoted that he would have withheld those who were casting out devils because they did not follow Jesus as John did. Yet his heart afterwards became so full of the love which animated the loving Saviour, that he was the beloved of the disciples, and his Gospel it is which best interprets the love of Christ to men. Love believeth all things, hopeth all things, and where there is love there will be neither room nor inclination for bitter judgments nor harsh criticism. Love will reign, and all will be love.

SOCIAL AMUSEMENTS.

What Constitutes *Fiducia* for the Christian.

The subject of social amusements in their relation to and bearing upon the religious life of the individual Christian and the life of the church is an ever current topic. It not only haunts the mind of the pastor, but intrudes itself ever and anon upon the deliberations of ecclesiastical assemblies, and hence, and for other reasons of a far more grave nature, I venture some remarks upon the theme.

First, then, let it be observed that we place ourselves as Christians upon the generous fact that the religion of our Lord does not mean, and does not, as some seem to think, curtail the happiness of its possessors; on the contrary, it designs to and does give to all who love and follow Christ in very truth, the highest, purest, noblest, and most enduring enjoyment. "Rejoice, and again I say rejoice," "rejoice in the Lord always," are only brief specimens of the inspired injunction regarding the emotions with which the possession of true religion as an inward experience of heavenly grace should ever be accompanied. What then is the language of such emotions? Is it a laugh or a groan, a smile or a sigh? To be sure the unfailing source of all this joy is far from the source of the happiness of the mere worldling. He gets his pleasure not from high and holy, pure and good thoughts, and hopes that ascend to and lay hold on God—that realize the truth of God's word. The worldling gets pleasure from congenial surroundings, and he is most at home in the midst of those associations which contribute to the gratification of his ambition or the hilarity of the physical senses. He has "a good time" with boon companions in ingenuous yams over

their cups, or on a night spree about town, or at a game of chance in some room with doors that swing in, or in the dance hall, or in a thousand other and not quite such objectionable ways; yet all void of the factor of spiritual thought or feeling or resolve. Not even is the influence of all this on the formation of character or public morality thought of—which things sometimes men who are not religious are more or less careful not to outrage.

Now the deeply religious nature can find no pleasure in such gross enjoyments, when God is not in all their thoughts. To be religious is to have God before us in all we do, and where he cannot be the Christian cannot rejoice; hence it follows that he is happiest in doing those things in which God is most sensibly realized; which brings us closest to Him. We are to rejoice then, not in our heels when the dance music is on and the lights are ablaze and the intoxication of the general whirl half dazes the brain, but when we are fulfilling the divine command, going hand in hand with Christ to do some glorious mission, or are in such communion and fellowship with Him in the sanctuary or elsewhere that we feel the ecstasy of the holy presence.

The Church Militant.

The church is not yet perfect. It is not yet finished. It is not yet, in reality, what it is in divine thought and purpose. With regard to the church, all things are in process, but all things are in progress. We must not forget this. This disarms criticism. We have a right to believe in and live in and work in, God's forecast for the church. Things are going to be clarified and simplified. Superstitions are going to fade out. There is going to be a growth in creed and a growth in practice. In the growth of creed the speculative is going to be rooted out, and only the certain and the essential are going to obtain root. Brotherliness is going to increase. Christ is going to become more and more, and His words are going to be better understood, and His sweet Spirit get the ascendancy. Moses laid his emphasis upon futurity, and this is the reason that I lay my emphasis upon futurity. What the church is now is no mean inducement to seek fellowship in it. But what the church is going to be is a still greater inducement to join it. It is natural to want to be on the side of that which has a magnificent destiny. The church of God has that. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, and He means some day to present it to Himself, a perfect church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. If you want to be in it on that coronation day, see to it that you get into it on this day when God is building it and shaping it and compacting it for its glorious eternity.

The Spirit's Temple.

It is most, too, that the vessel which is destined to participate in the fulness of the Spirit hereafter, should be clean to bear him now; "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own. For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body." (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20). These words condemn a voluntary leniency or carelessness with the self-indulgence of youthful passion. The modest words of teachers and parents from its early years should teach the child to abhor with the instinct of its Christian faith anything impure, even in thought. To be silent is to clothe the sin with the dangerous attraction of mystery; to be inexact is to pave the way for a false conscience, deadly in after results. Prudent, candid instructions will beget a healthy, right-toned moral nature, certain in its development to become more and more abhorrent of the sin. Thus will be erected an impregnable defense of Christian morality—"a fortification with a strong outwork, a murus et latrunculae."

The Highest Estimate.

We honor great men for those powers or deeds which distinguish them above their fellows, and respect human nature because of the possibilities which we see realized in the noblest specimens of the race. But the highest honor ever paid to human nature, the noblest estimate ever made of it, was in the fact that Jesus Christ "tasted death for every man." He did not die for Socrates because he was a thinker, but because he was a man. He did not die for Charlemagne because he was a mighty ruler or warrior, but because he was a man. He did not die for Shakespeare because he was a genius, but because he was a man. Christ offered Himself for these men not because of those qualities which distinguish them above their fellows, but because of those qualities which they possessed in common with the wayside beggar.

The Soul of Life.

Now this soul-life, which manifests itself in thought, in conduct, in hope, faith and love, makes us human, and lifts us above every other kind of earthly existence. It is our distinctive attribute, the godlike side of our being, which, under penalty of sinking to lower worlds, we must bring out and cultivate.—Bishop Spaulding.

The Church in China is the name of the new bi-monthly magazine published by Bishop Graves, of Shanghai, in order to inform the church at large of the progress of the China mission.

Through the Baptist Missionary Union, work is done in nineteen countries, the Gospel preached in more than thirty languages, and at an average cost of \$60,000 a month, or \$2,000 a day.

Australian Methodists have accumulated a fund for their superannuated ministers, so large that they are able to pay them from \$500 to \$1,000 per annum, according to length of service and physical needs.—Zion's Herald.